

REMARKS

The present Request for Continued Examination (RCE) is further responsive to the Office Action dated January 11, 2002, and addresses specific issues noted by the Examiner in a recent telephone interview with the undersigned representative on June 19, 2000.

Applicant appreciated the courtesy extended by the Examiner to conduct the telephone interview after prior Final Action. In the telephone interview, the Examiner suggested that if the number N recited in claim 1 should be qualified in reference to the considerations by the buyer to determine the value of N, the claims would define over the prior art of record (the Examiner indicated a further search may be conducted). In response to Examiner's suggestion, Applicant amended claims 1, 13 and 25 to recite that N is a number less than number of all bids, and predetermined by the buyer based on tradeoff between price competition among bidders (at a smaller N value) and number of bidders available for buyer selection of a bidder based on factors other than price (at a larger N value).

Further, Applicant amended claims 8, 20 and 26 to recite that the buyer rating is relied on by the potential bidders to decide on whether to bid on the service request, wherein the higher the rating, the more willing the potential bidders would want to bid, and the lower the rating, the less willing the potential bidders would want to bid.

In view of the claim amendments herein, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims pending in the present application is patentable over the prior art of record, and is now in condition for allowance, and such action at an early date is earnestly solicited. **To expedite**

passage of this case to issuance, Applicant would appreciate the Examiner extending the courtesy of a telephone call to the undersigned representative to discuss any outstanding issues that may not have been adequately addressed by this amendment and response.

The Assistant Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this Response and associated documents but have not been enclosed, or to credit any overpayment to **Deposit Account No. 501288** referencing docket no. 1091/201.

Dated: July 11, 2002

Respectfully submitted,

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